

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

November 5, 2007

(Approved as amended on Monday, January 7, 2008)

Vice Chair Richard Nass called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:05 pm in the Fallen Heroes Conference Room, Maine Department of Public Safety Building, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta. Members present included Jay Bradshaw, Stephan Bunker, Chief Kenneth Desmond, Chief Darrel Fournier, Ron Green, Alan Hammond (for Alan Johnston), Geoffrey Maker, Ed Marks, Robert McAleer, Alex McPhedran, Vicki Schmidt, Charles Soltan, Richard Taylor (for Chief John Dean), David Wacker and Susan Pinette (staff). Members absent included Representative Patricia Blanchette, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Representative Dean Cray, Gerry Gay, Harty Norris, Representative Benjamin Pratt and Senator Ethan Strimling. Chief Chaplain Rev. Dan Coffin representing the Maine State Response Team attended the meeting as guest of the Fire Commission.

A motion by Darrel Fournier, seconded by Ken Desmond, to accept the minutes of the October 1, 2007 minutes as printed. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

The Spring Conference Committee updated the Fire Commission on the plans for the Blaine House Conference for Emergency First Responders. The conference will be held on March 13th and 14th (Thursday/Friday) at Verillo's in South Portland (Exit 48 off the Maine Turnpike). Hotel accommodations will be available at a reduced cost for conference attendees. A draft of the conference flyer will be available at the next Fire Commission meeting. Maine Municipal Association (MMA) has agreed to partner with the Fire Commission and will again handle registration and mailing of the conference flyers.

The Training Facilities Committee reported they plan to meet before the end of the year to discuss their options regarding the Task Force Report's recommendations including a location for the state training facility. Originally the committee had recommended the Fire Commission submit a proposal to the Brunswick Local Redevelopment Authority (BLRA) for space at the Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS) when it closes. In May 2007, the Fire Commission's application was not accepted by the BLRA. The Training Facilities Committee expects to make another recommendation to the Fire Commission early in 2008.

The Best Practices Committee continues to remind members to submit nominees for the Fire Commission's annual Best Practice Award. There were several suggestions regarding the awarding of the Best Practice Award. Members inquired about whether recipients could be identified throughout the year with

the annual award being presented by the Governor at the Spring Conference or at the State House.

The Workers' Compensation Committee met in October with representatives of the Fire Commission, Maine Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), Maine Employer's Mutual Insurance Company (MEMIC), Maine AFL-CIO and MMA. The committee reported the meeting was informational and included discussion of specific WCB cases and the different factors of the individual cases that influence when benefits attach. Members also discussed the options of supplemental gap insurance and the difficulties of smaller communities to pay. Other issues included MMA's firefighter protection sponsored programs, educating fire departments of their options, availability of grants for start up programs, and the overall effect on volunteer recruitment and retention. The committee is in the process of drafting a report with their findings and recommendations for the Fire Commission. However the committee did agree that at this time they would not recommend to the Fire Commission that legislation be submitted in 2008. Fire Commission members agreed that these issues would be a timely topic for the Spring 2008 conference.

Old Business

At the recent September and October Fire Commission meetings, members had many questions and concerns regarding procedures, duties and responsibilities following the death of a firefighter, including Maine's line of duty death benefits. A sample of the issues raised included which state or local agencies are responsible for investigation when a firefighter is seriously injured or killed, what are the responsibilities of local departments and fire chiefs, and how do federal regulations differ from state regulations regarding death benefits. The Fire Commission invited Chief Chaplain Rev. Dan Coffin from the Line-of-Duty Death State Response Teams Program to discuss his group's response. Rev. Coffin distributed a brochure and spoke about L.A.S.T- the local assistance state team. The program's goal is to assist grieving families with information and access to various federal, state and local benefits. L.A.S.T. helps with the reporting process and other information regarding benefits that survivors may be entitled. Rev. Coffin explained L.A.S.T was part of a larger program- specifically requested by Fire Chiefs to help grieving families, departments and communities.

Fire Commission members had additional questions regarding procedures and protocols used in the investigation of a line of duty death. Concerns were raised that benefits could be denied if procedures were not followed or information was incomplete. Members recommended that local fire departments needed a standard list of the required information prior to the initial investigation. Members also emphasized the need to coordinate with other state and local agencies to assure procedures were correctly followed during this difficult time. Members suggested that representatives from the Fire Commission, Maine Fire Chiefs, Maine State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO), Maine Police Chiefs, Maine State Police, E-911 (dispatchers), L.A.S.T. and other interested parties meet and develop protocols and a standard checklist. Another

suggestion proposed a central phone number be provided- thereby starting the process and assuring all the correct parties are notified following a line of duty death.

A motion by Darrel Fournier, seconded by Ron Green, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission appoints a committee to establish protocols for local fire departments and to report back their recommendations by February 2008. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Nass appointed the following Fire Commission members to the Line-of-Duty Committee:

David Wacker- Chair
Chief Darrel Fournier
Chief John Dean
Ron Green

Fire Commission members reviewed the November edition of the flyer. Members also discussed the format and procedures prior to the flyer's distribution. Members agreed to review a draft and approve a final version at the Fire Commission's monthly meeting.

New Business

Several issues were discussed by members for consideration at future meetings- start up grants, live fire evolutions and statewide mutual aid.

Members also discussed F.A.S.T.- a guide being developed by the Maine Fire Chiefs' Association to improve communications among Maine's fire service. The guide will be available on digital or hard copy by January 2008. Funding is needed to complete the project.

A motion by Ken Desmond, seconded by Darrel Fournier, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission donates \$2500.00 to the Maine Fire Chiefs' Association to develop the F.A.S.T. guide. The motion passes unanimously.

Members reviewed the meeting schedule and agreed to hold the first legislative fire caucus prior to the monthly meeting on January 7, 2008.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Vice Chair Nass adjourned the meeting at 3:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette

Meeting Schedule and Dates of Interest

<u>Monday, December 3rd</u>	MEETING	Florian Hall	1:00pm
--	---------	--------------	--------

Happy Holidays!!

<u>Monday, January 7th, 2008</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
---	-------------	-------------	--------

<u>Monday, January 7th, 2008</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm
---	---------	-------------	--------

<u>Monday, February 4th, 2008</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
--	-------------	-------------	--------

<u>Monday, February 4th, 2008</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm
--	---------	-------------	--------

<u>Monday, March 3rd, 2008</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
---	-------------	-------------	--------

<u>Monday, March 3rd, 2007</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm
---	---------	-------------	--------

<u>Thursday, March 13th, 2008</u>	CONFERENCE	South Portland	All Day
--	------------	----------------	---------

<u>Friday, March 14th, 2008</u>	CONFERENCE	South Portland	All Day
--	------------	----------------	---------

<u>Monday, April 7, 2008</u>	ANNUAL MEETING**	State House	1:00pm
------------------------------	------------------	-------------	--------

<u>Monday, May 5, 2008</u>	MEETING	Florian Hall	1:00pm
----------------------------	---------	--------------	--------

To Be Scheduled:

Legislative Breakfast- Senator Inn January or February 2008??

**Annual Meeting- Election of New Fire Commission Officers

